

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 831

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 3971

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS, KN

SUBJECT: HO TAMS'S PROPOSAL FOR PEACE AGREEMENT WITH US

REF: A) SEOUL 1904 B) STATE 59455

SUMMARY: FONOFF VIEWS HO TAMS'S PROPOSAL PRIMARILY AS PRO-PAGANDA PLOY LOOKING TOWARD UNGA, AS NOT HELPFUL TO NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, BUT AS HARBINGER OF DPRK TACTICS AT NEXT UNGA. END SUMMARY.

1. DRAWING OF RFTELS, EMBOFF DISCUSSED HO TAM'S PEACE PROPOSAL WITH FONOFF NORTHEAST ASIA DIV HEAD SEO, WHO IN TURN PROVIDED FOLLOWING SUMMARY OF JAPANESE OFFICIAL AND PRESS REACTIONS.

2. SEO SAID FONOFF HAS SPECULATED AT LENGTH CONCERNING NORTH KOREAN MOTIVATIONS UNDERLINING HO TAM PROPOSAL, AND ARRIVED AT CONSENSUS ON THREE POINTS.

(A) CITING SAME ELEMENTS NOTED BY EMBASSY SEOUL (REF A, PARA 4), FONOFF CONCLUDES THAT PRIMARY PURPOSE
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IS TO ACHIEVE PROPAGANDA ADVANTAGE AND LAY GROUNDWORK FOR NEXT UNGA. PROPOSAL DEPICTS USG AS AGGRESSIVE ALIEN

FOR CONTROLLING ROKG, LATTER BEING PAWN UNRESPONSIVE TO PEACEFUL DESIRES OF KOREAN PEOPLE. FURTHER IMPLICATION IS THAT US WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE SIMPLE SOLUTION TO DISTASTEFUL SITUATION UNWORTHY OF UN INVOLVEMENT.

(B) BY APPEALING DIRECTLY TO US, NORTH KOREANS MAY HOPE TO UNSETTLE ROKG, CAUSING IT TO BECOME SUSPICIOUS OF USG INTENTIONS AND INDUCING SENSE OF WEAKNESS AND ISOLATION. ROKG WOULD OF COURSE NOT EXPECT USG TO RESPOND TO NORTH KOREAN PROPOSAL, BUT MAY BE UNEASY NONETHELESS.

(C) PROPOSAL PROVIDES AT LEAST ONE ANSWER TO QUESTION OF WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH ARMISTICE AGREEMENT. IN SHORT, IF US ARGUES THAT ARMISTICE AGREEMENT MUST BE PRESERVED IN ORDER ALSO TO PRESERVE PEACE, DPRK CAN RESPOND THAT ARMISTICE SHOULD BE REPLACED BY PEACE AGREEMENT AS SET FORTH IN HO TAM PROPOSAL.

3. SEO NOTED THAT JAPANESE PRESS, AFTER REPORTING PROPOSAL FROM PYONGYANG AND REBUTTAL FROM SEOUL, EXPRESSED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN FACT THAT NORTH KOREA APPARENTLY WISHED TO OPEN DIALOGUE WITH US, COUNTRY WHICH IT HAD PREVIOUSLY EXCORIATED. PRESS WAS ALSO INTERESTED IN EFFECT ON NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, WITH ONE NEWSPAPER SUGGESTING THAT NORTH, EXASPERATED OVER SLOW PROGRESS, HAD DECIED ON UNILATERAL APPEAL TO US, EVEN THOUGH US WOULD OBVIOUSLY FIND IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO NEGOTIATE WITH NORTH IF SOUTH WERE EXCLUDED.

4. SEO STRESSED THAT FONOFF TAKES NEGATIVE VIEW OF PROPOSAL, CONSIDERING IT CONTRARY TO SPIRIT OF JULY 4 JOINT STATMENT AND NOT HELPFUL TO NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE. HE NOTED THAT IT IS VERY NARROWLY DRAWN AND FAILS TO ANSWERSEVERAL KEY QUESTIONS SUCH AS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO DMZ AND ARMISTICE LINE, WHTAT AUTHORITY COULD AGREE TO TERMINATION OF ARMISTICE, ETC.

5. THOUGH FONOFF TENTATIVE ANALYSIS HAD FAILED TO
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DISCERN ANY POSITIVE OR CONTRUCTIVE ELEMENTS IN NORTH KOREAN PROPOSAL, SEO WONDERED IF USG MIGHT NOT FIND SOME CLEVER WAY OF EXPLOITING SITUATION. FOR EXAMPLE, MIGHT USG MAKE COUNTER-PROPOSALCALLED FOR DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS IN WHICH ROKG WOULD BE FULL PARTICIPANT AND PRC ASSOCIATED IN SOME WAY.

6. COMMENT: SEO'S REMARKS MADE CLEAR THAT FONOFF DOES NOT DISMISS HO TAM'S PROPOSAL OUT OF HAND AS SHALLOW PROPAGANDA PLOY. FONOFF BELIEVES PROPOSAL MAY

CONTAIN HINT OF DPRK TACTICS FOR NEXT UNGA, AND THERE-
FORE THAT ROKG AND ITS FRIENDS AND ALLIES MUST BE
PREPARED TO COUNTER OR REBUT HO TAM'S LINE. SEO SEEMED
PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT DPRK ALTERNATIVE TO EXISTING
ARMISTICE ARRANGEMENT COULD WIN SIGNIFICANT MAJORITY
SUPPORT AT NEXT UNGA.
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